

REMARKS

Status of the Application

Claims 1-8 are all the claims pending in the application. The status of the claims are as follows:

Claims 1, 3-6 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Pontoglio (US 4,381,392).

Claims 2 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Pontoglio.

By this Amendment, Applicants hereby amend claim 1, cancel claim 7 and add new claim 9.

Preliminary Matters

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim to foreign priority and for confirming that the certified copy of the priority document was received.

Applicant also thanks the Examiner for initialing the references listed on form PTO/SB/08 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on June 22, 2006.

Prior Art Rejections

Claims 1, 3-6 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Pontoglio (US 4,381,392).

Claims 2 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Pontoglio.

Without conceding to the merits of the Examiner's rejections, Applicants hereby amend claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of claim 7. Accordingly, the following comments will be mainly directed toward the Examiner's rejection of claim 7.

Claim 1, as amended, recites “a step of extracting pollutants by immersing the pump gasket in a solvent, said solvent being ethanol.” Applicants respectfully submit that

The Examiner concedes that Pontoglio fails to explicitly disclose submersing an elastomer pump gasket. However, the Examiner alleges that “Pontoglio discloses rubber, which would at least suggest a rubber gasket to an ordinary skilled artisan.” Applicants respectfully disagree.

Pontoglio discloses a method for removing chlorinated solvents from chlorinated polymers, using ethanol. However, in Pontoglio, the material to be treated is always in powder form. In particular, the abstract notes that the chlorinated polymers are dried and pulverized prior to the treatment to remove chlorinated solvents from the chlorinated polymers. See also, col. 1, lines 41-42; col. 1, lines 54-55; col. 2, line 35; col. 2, line 50; col. 2, line 65 & col. 3, line 1; col. 3, line 34; col. 3, line 48; col. 3, line 66; col. 4, line 13; col. 4, line 24; col. 4, line 43; col. 4, line 58; and claims 1, 4, 5 & 7 of Pontoglio.

On the other hand, amended claim 1 requires that pollutants are removed from an elastomer pump gasket. In contrast to the method of Pontoglio, the pump gasket in claim 1 is not pulverized before treatment. Applicants respectfully submit that because the method disclosed in Pontoglio is not directed toward removing chlorinated polymers from a completed product, the method disclosed therein cannot render claim 1 obvious.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1 is patentable over the applied art. Claims 2-6 and 8 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 1.

New Claims

For additional claim coverage merited by the scope of the invention, Applicant is adding new claim 9, which is allowable at least by reason of its dependency.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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